

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

Approved For Release 2002/09/04 : CIA-RDP66B00560R000100100025-7

RESPONSE

15 April 1963

The agreement on the NRO has now been completed and is in the process of implementation. This agreement, in my opinion, establishes a clear channel of guidance and clarifies the relationships and responsibilities between the Department of Defense and CIA, both of whom have serious responsibilities in this field. The agreement will ensure that there is close coordination and intense effort in advanced technology and planning of the national reconnaissance program and also the current reconnaissance efforts. We will watch closely the management of the NRO and ensure that this program is now successful in every respect.

The new agreement on the NRO provides for close relationships between the NRO and the United States Intelligence Board.

With respect to the specific recommendations on the subject, they encompass a number of obvious management problems. The arrangements for handling these problems are outlined in the recently executed NRO agreement. The carrying out of this agreement in an effective manner depends on close collaboration between the DCI and the Secretary of Defense. It should be noted that there is a natural interface between CIA and the Department of Defense in the vital and complicated area of overhead reconnaissance. Management of this problem calls also for close collaboration between responsible authorities in both departments.

The new agreement which is being implemented was reached after due consideration of the possibility of either Defense or CIA taking full responsibility for the reconnaissance program. It was decided that this would be unwise because on the one hand it would involve relocating vast resources from the Department of Defense. On the other hand it would involve a loss of responsibility and imaginativeness which exists in CIA and which has made many valuable contributions in the field of overhead reconnaissance. Moreover, transfer from CIA would run the risk of losing a vantage for secrecy which the Agency is so well qualified to protect.

The NRO agreement has been drafted with all the above factors in mind, and I concur in the judgment of the Board that it is a well conceived and soundly detailed plan for the management of this important program.

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